

## VANDALISM

# Vandals Smash Bus Windshields

By KEITH L. MARTIN

The latest in a series of acts of vandalism against Duxbury's yellow school buses has the town's transportation provider seeing red.

Early on the morning of March 21, the windshields of five buses parked behind

Chandler School were smashed and reported to Laidlaw, the town's bus provider.

Lt. Chip Chubb of the Duxbury Police Department said the discovery was made

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One representative of Laidlaw, the company that leases buses to the town, says vandalism of the vehicles is increasing, including five recently smashed windshields.

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around 7 a.m. on Sunday and while the act of vandalism is being investigated, there isn't a lot of information leading to any suspects.

"We don't have a lot to go on," he said. "Nothing was found at the scene, but the investigation is still ongoing."

Duxbury Public Schools' Business Manager Mickey McGonagle said Thursday that the incident had "no impact" on the transportation of students for the following Monday, as Laidlaw has three spare buses to use in emergencies.

McGonagle did say that there have been vandalism problems at the parking lot behind Chandler School and that the company did have security there until February, but was unsure why it was discontinued.

According to Valerie Roderick, a manager at Laidlaw who handles Duxbury buses, the company had hired a security guard to monitor the parking lot, but the expense became too much for the company. Since then, said Roderick, vandalism has become a regular occurrence to buses located behind Chandler.

"This happens every weekend," she said. "Police are doing the best they can, but there are no witnesses."

Roderick said that over the last month, vandals have turned on lights on the buses to drain the batteries, burnt steering wheels, and thrown

the contents of first aid kits and trash bags around the vehicles.

As for Sunday's events, Roderick estimates that between new windshields, overtime for staff to make repairs and clean up glass, the incident cost the company around \$2,000.

"I think if it comes to the point where it costs more to repair the buses than pay for security, we'll have to reconsider what we're doing, but both are pretty expensive and it's not up to me [but instead the parent company]," she said.

Roderick added that the buses are housed at Chandler because there is really nowhere else in town to keep them and according to their contract with Duxbury schools, the buses must be housed in-town.

"We have a parking lot in Plymouth with cameras [for surveillance], but the contract says they need to be [in Duxbury] and we pay the town to rent that space behind the school," said Roderick.

As for concerns regarding further vandalism, Roderick said that it is almost a sure bet, but she was unsure how many residents truly know these incidents are happening.

"I expect it to get worse," she said. "The weather is getting nicer and it is staying lighter later, so there will be more kids around. We have some kids using these buses as 'playhouses,' but these are dangerous places for them to play around."